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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

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TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: MALKI: PA HOPES INTERNATIONAL MEETING WILL BE A
PLEASANT SURPRISE

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. PA Minister of Information Riad Malki told StaffDel Makovsky August 13 that the PA hopes there will be a "pleasant surprise" at the international meeting in the Fall. Malki said the Palestinians plan to work hard to achieve a "Declaration of Principles" between the PA and the GOI before the meeting. He also discussed an idea for bringing Palestinian refugees in Iraq to the West Bank. He recommend against early PLC elections and identified a solution to the Gaza situation as a higher priority than early elections. He added that it will be very hard to reverse the situation if HAMAS still controls Gaza in a year. End Summary.

"Pleasant Surprise"

12. (C) PA Minister of Information Riad Malki told StaffDel Makovsky August 13 that the PA had noted recent attempts by the USG to tone down expectations for the international meeting planned for the Fall. He mentioned the insistence on the word "meeting," vice "conference," and that the Secretary, not the President, will host. Malki said the PA,

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nonetheless, hopes that if it does its "homework" and coordinates with the GOI and Arab states, it might be able to present the USG with a "pleasant surprise." He said the Palestinians want to negotiate a "Declaration of Principles" with the GOI. According to Malki, this brief document would show that the GOI is committed to ending the occupation and would get the two sides "on the right track," giving the Palestinian people hope. He said Saudi participation in the international meeting will be the "prize" for the GOI, if they "deliver" on a declaration. Malki said the Palestinians will insist on 100% of the West Bank plus land swaps as part of any deal, which he believes the Israelis previously agreed to.

Right of Return

13. (C) Asked about the right of return, Malki said he personally presented to Israeli PM Ehud Olmert a proposal for Israel to allow Palestinian refugees in Iraq to return to the West Bank. He said such a move would establish a precedent that the right of return is to a Palestinian state, not Israel. He noted that the plight of the Palestinians in Iraq is so dire that no one would dare protest this arrangement or insist on return to Israel. A precedent would be established, which could then be used for other Palestinians, such as those in Lebanon's Nahar el Barid refugee camp.

Early Elections? No Thank You!

¶4. (C) Malki said he opposes early elections, and that it is not clear such elections are legal or can even be organized, especially in Gaza. He said HAMAS is in an excellent position to disrupt elections in Gaza and the West Bank. Asked if there are plans to form a new political party based on the current government, Malki said all the ministers are too busy governing to work on politics. He said that if Fatah fails to reform, however, it will be challenged, noting that PM Salam Fayyad has become one of the PA's most important political leaders.

And What of Gaza?

¶5. (C) Malki said if HAMAS is still governing Gaza in one year, it will be very difficult to ever dislodge them. He noted that the policy of "squeezing" HAMAS is not guaranteed success. He said if the current strategy does not work, other options must be considered and "wondered" about the possibility of military action against HAMAS. He said another possibility is an international force, under UN Chapter 7, with European forces guarding the Israeli border in the north, and Arab and Muslim forces preventing smuggling in the south. Malki said he does not believe HAMAS would dare to challenge such a force.

¶6. (C) Comment: Malki is a key member of PM Fayyad's government, but he is not part of the Palestinian inner circle involved in negotiations with Israel. his view on these issues should be considered his own, and not necessarily representative of those of President Abbas or Fayyad. End Comment.

¶7. (U) StaffDel Makovsky did not have the chance to clear this cable before departure.

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